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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 EURE-00 USIE-00 PM-09

NSC-10 SS-14 RSC-01 NIC-01 RSR-01 CCO-00 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 PRS-01 /076 W
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O R 291806 Z MAR 73
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000
INFO USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 08856

E. O. GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR
SUBJ: SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV' S SURPRISE DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW

1. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS INITIAL EMBASSY REACTION TO SUDDEN NEWS OF IMPENDING DEPARTURE FROM PARIS OF SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV.
DESPITE MANY INSTANCES OF FRICTION BETWEEN ABRASIMOV AND THE FRENCH ESTABLISHEMENT, BEGINNING WITH HIS PROBLEMS WITH " ANTI-COMMUNIST" FRENCH PRESS IMMEDIATELY AFTER ARRIVAL HERE IN FALL 1971 TO RPEPARE FOR BRESZHNEV VISIT THAT OCTOBER, VIRTUALLY NOBODY IN PARIS EXPECTED HIM TO RETURN HOME AFTER ONLY ONE AND ONE- HALF YEAR' S EXPERIENCE IN FRANCE. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE REASON FOR HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE PLANS-- ILLUSTRATED BY EMBASSY' S SURPRISE RECEIPT MARCH 28. OF INVITATION TO ATTEND HIS FAREWELL RECEPTION APRIL 3 -- MUST BE RELATED TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN MOSCOW. PERHAPS SIGNS OF INCREASINGLY PROM-INENT ROLE BY BRESZHNEV (WHO IS KNOWN TO REGARD ABRASIMOV HIGHLY) IN CONDUCT OF SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY (MOSCOW 2608) MAY BE CONNECTED WITH HIS RETURN HOME.

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2. DURING COURTESY CALL ON ABRASIMOV MARCH 28 (SEP TEL), HE TOLD ME HE LOOKED FORWARD TO RETURNING TO MOSCOW AFTER 16 YEARS ABROAD. WITHOUT EXPLAINING NATURE OF HIS NEW DUTIES, HE INDICATED THEY WOULD INVOLVE SOME TRAVELING, " INCLUDING TO WASHINGTON," WHERE HE HOPED TO RENEW ACQUAINTANCE WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH.

3. POLISH EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY PALASZ TOLD US DEL OFFICER MARCH 28 THAT ABRASIMOV WOULD ASSUME VERY HIGH CPSU POST CONNECTED WITH " POLITBURO" (SIC). PALASZ SPECULATED ABRASIMOV MIGHT TAKE OVER TWO KEY FOREIGN POLICY AREAS AND MIGHT BECOME " BRESHNEV' S DR. KISSINGER" -- A TRUSTED FOREIGN POLICY EXPERT WORKING INTIMATELY ON MAJOR WORLD PROBLEMS. IF SO, ABRASIMOV' S PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE AS MINISTER- COUNSELOR IN PEKING AND AMBASSADOR SUCCESSIVELY TO WARSAW, EAST BERLIN AND PARIS WOULD PROVIDE EXCELLENT BACKGROUND FOR ROLE OF THIS KIND.

4. LE MONDE' S SOVIET ANALYST MICHEL TATU TELLS US LE MONDE MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT ALAIN JACOB INFORMED BY RELIABLE SOVIET SOURCES THAT ABRASIMOV WILL BE GIVEN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES IN CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE. TATU SPECULATES ABRASIMOV " MIGHT BE NAMED PARTY SECRETARY BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO BE SURE."

5. IN ANY CASE, ABRASIMOV APPEARED COMPLETELY SELF- ASSURED AND RELAXED IN REFERRING TO HIS REASSIGNMENT, WHICH WE SUSPECT WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT PROMOTION. HIS SUCCESSOR HERE WILL REPORTEDLY BE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA CHERVONENKO.
GDS
IRWIN

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS08856
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730341/aaaailnd.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01-Aug-2001 by willialc>; APPROVED <07-Sep-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 980107
Subject: SOVIET AMBASSADOR ABRASIMOV' S SURPRISE DEPARTURE FOR MOSCOW
TAGS: PFOR, FR, UR
To: EUR
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BONN
LONDON
MULTIPLE
USBERLIN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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